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## Diet and Exercise Tips for Busy People

Many of us have little or no time for a traditional workout. Given the demands of family, work and school, the thought of spending time at the gym or outside jogging can seem like a fantasy. But even the busiest people can find ways to stay fit by changing their daily routine.

Fitness experts recommend a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes of exercise three times a week. Even the minimum recommended amount of exercise can drastically improve your health, give you more energy and reduce stress.

Use the following tips to incorporate exercise into your day, whether you are at home or at work.

### At Home

- Prepare your own meals instead of ordering take-out. Not only will you burn calories cooking, you can also make sure you use healthy ingredients and limit portion sizes.
- Put away your television remote so that you have to get up to change channels. You can also try stretching or doing aerobics while watching TV.
- Clean the old-fashioned way. Vigorous mopping, scrubbing and dusting can burn calories and develop muscles the same way as "real" exercise.
- If you have a yard, use a hand-mower or other hand tools when gardening.
- Take your pets for long walks instead of just letting them outside. You will both benefit from the added exercise, fresh air and time together.
- Play with your children outside instead of watching movies or playing video games. No kid is going to turn down a chance to play tag or shoot hoops with Mom and Dad, and you get exercise to boot.

- Walk to the corner store instead of driving, and walk as much as possible when running errands.

### On the Commute

- If you live close enough, walk to work. Even if it is only a mile away, a brisk walk each way can count as your daily exercise.
- If you live a little farther away, consider riding your bike to work. Cycling is one of the most beneficial, rewarding and fun exercise activities. If you make it a part of your daily commute, you will get to work energized and will be able to burn off steam on the way home.
- If walking or cycling isn't an option, use public transit. You will get some exercise walking to and from the stops. You will also save money, reduce mileage on your car and promote a cleaner environment.
- If you must drive, park a few blocks away or at least at the far end of the lot to force yourself to walk more.



## At Work

- Take the stairs to your floor. If you work on a higher floor, walk part of the way and then take the elevator.
- Bring your lunch. This allows you to pack healthy ingredients and control portions, as well as save money.
- It's okay to go out to lunch with the gang occasionally, just not every day. When you do, don't eat the entire meal; take the rest back to the office for lunch the next day.
- Get out of the office on your lunch break. Even if you brought your own lunch, don't eat at your desk. Walk somewhere else to build in some easy exercise.
- Drink water or diet soda. You can remove hundreds of empty calories from your diet per day if you avoid regular soda.
- Turn a coffee break into a walk around the office.
- Take a few minutes every two hours to do some light stretching at your desk.

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## Feeling Blue?

It is normal to feel a little down after the holidays. Once all the decorating, gift giving and receiving, family gathering and merrymaking are over, a letdown may set in. Children return to school after the holiday break and adults can be faced with struggling through the darker, colder, winter months to pay off holiday bills.

How can you manage these feelings as the holidays come to a close? Here are some suggestions:

- **Find support in others.** Confide in trusted friends and family members.
- **Exercise regularly.** A regular fitness plan can, not only, help to improve your physical appearance but can also help improve your mood and boost your self-esteem as well.
- **Eat Healthy.** Many of us are faced with the additional temptation of special foods during the holidays. Now it should be a little easier to stick to a nutritionally balanced diet. Avoid foods and environments that may encourage over-indulging. Also avoid alcohol, which is a depressant.
- **Get the right amount of sleep.** Experts recommend seven to eight hours each night. Resist the urge to oversleep and try to stay on a regular schedule.
- **Plan social activities.** Extend communication with friends and family throughout the entire year, not just during the holidays.
- **Make time for activities outdoors,** especially on bright, sunny days. During the winter, daylight hours are shorter. Make a point to step outside, even if only for a few minutes, during breaks.
- **Talk to a professional.** If the blues you're feeling lingers for several weeks and is interfering with your ability to enjoy life and function effectively, seek help.

If you have other EAP concerns, please call the toll free number, **1-888-290-4EAP** or TDD access at 1-800-697-0353. This employee/family benefit is provided by your employer. "For information related to your everyday concerns, go to [www.GuidanceResources.com](http://www.GuidanceResources.com). "First Time Users" will be prompted for their company ID: **FEDSOURCE**, to register and create your own username and password.

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